

COMPONENT 3 OPTIMISED FORESTRY DEVELOPMENT

INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON THE STATE OF THE FORESTS.

Part 3

4 Development of Non Timber Opportunities Within Forests

All the partner countries feel that the development of non-timber opportunities within the forest is vitally important for continued sustainable rural development. These non-timber products “generally represent a relevant part of the forest business, even if they are not always appropriately considered in terms of allocation of investments” (Liguria).

4.1 Mineral extraction from forest land

The extraction of minerals from forestry land is fairly common, at varying levels, across the partner regions. Usually this is managed independently from the forest, as it causes issues with certification, for example the opencast coal mining areas of South Wales are not included in the certified area.

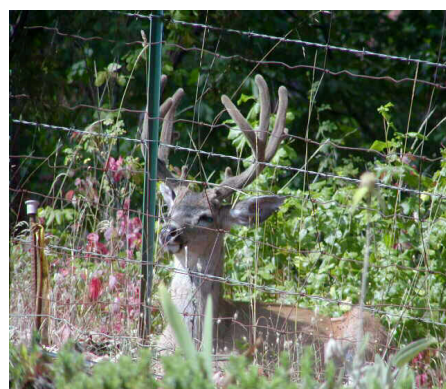
Being independent from the forestry sector usually means that the benefits accrued from these mining operations do not benefit the local rural economy and are not sustainable in the long term. The environmental impact of new mining areas and the reclamation of old mine workings is becoming a major issue on the green agenda, restricting future development.

4.2 Non-wood products

Whilst on a much smaller scale, the production of non-wood products is seen as “important for the local economy as they represent a relevant income generating activity for local communities” (Liguria). However in most of the partner regions these operations are not managed or controlled, and occur irregularly as the opportunities are limited, sales are often low and niche markets can become saturated.

4.3 Hunting

Hunting, apart from in Brandenburg and Slovakia, is of very minor economic importance, however it does have a much higher cultural importance, being an intrinsic part of rural life in most rural areas of the partner regions.



4.4 Wind Farms

Green renewable energy is seen as a priority in all of the partner regions, and the development of wind farms is seen as a vital part of this sector. However “forest land is usually not affected because of a consequence of the greater environmental impacts, greater demands are made and development costs are greater” (Brandenburg).

4.5 Wood Energy

The use of wood as a fuel for domestic heating and cooking is common throughout the partner regions, and consumption is generally increasing in line with the increased costs of gas and oil.

Energy from wood fuel is also seen as a green alternative, and unlike wind farms does not cause major problems with environmental or planning issues. Development of the wood fuel sector is seen as a priority in all the partner regions, as it will reduce carbon emissions, and produce energy from a renewable source.

4.6 Tourism, Sport, and Recreation

The forests and woodlands throughout the partners regions are an important asset for tourism, sport, and recreation, and the development of these pastimes plays an increasingly important part in sustainable rural regeneration.



“65% of the Welsh populace had visited a woodland in the last year, of these 60% made regular visits”

Table 4.1 Development of non timber opportunities within the forest

Strengths	Weakness
Additional to timber revenues	Lack of training and knowledge
Renewable and sustainable	Lack of investment
High priority both politically and publicly	Low market awareness
Contribute to a diverse and strong local economy	
Opportunities	Threats
Promotion of renewable resources	Lack of consistent market
Development of new products and markets	Imports from outside the region
Good opportunity for the development of rural communities	
Increase in demand for natural and ecological products	

5 Forestry Planning and Management

5.1 Different forest types

The Variety of forest types within the partner region is huge and diverse, however the one area of commonality is that the forests can be divided into 2 separate broad types - Natural Forest areas and Plantation Forests, usually on a non-indigenous species. Within this great variety of forest types there is an even greater variety of management and silvicultural systems

5.2 Forests with management plans

5.3 Long and short term plans

Forest planning in some partner region has a long history, "in Germany it has a tradition which is over 150 years old", whilst in other partner countries forest planning is still in its infancy.

There are also several scales of planning from regional strategic plans, through forest plans, to more localised plans for individual stands of trees.

All partner regions see the need to improve the quality of forest planning, to increase the area of forest covered by forest plans, and to ensure that forest plans are constantly being adjusted to meet the changing political and social needs of their region.

5.4 Recent innovations in technology

All the partner regions see the use of GIS systems as an important tool in the storage and manipulation of forest data to aid forest planning. Uptake and usage of GIS packages is varied across the regions, but its use is increasing rapidly.

5.5 Integrated monitoring, forest health

In Wales and Brandenburg, where GIS systems have been more widely adopted there is an increasing amount of integrated monitoring of forest health at all levels of management. There is little or no monitoring in the other partner regions.

5.6 Natural and semi natural woodlands

There are very few areas of natural or semi natural woodlands in any of the partner regions, due mainly to the high level of development in the partner regions. Those small areas that do still remain have "great significance as they function as guides for natural developments, species reserves, and starting points for the return of the landscape to natural conditions". This explains why in all of the partner regions these areas are generally covered by some protective legislation.

5.7 Clearcut forests

Clearcutting has been the traditional way to manage many of the forests within the partner regions, especially the plantation forests. Increasingly though the level of clearcutting is decreasing, due to increasing awareness of the disadvantages of the clearcutting system, such as environmental degradation and hydrological and soil conservation issues.

Whilst clearcutting does continue in some areas the scale is much smaller and the control mechanisms are greater.

5.8 Natural engineering (protection forests)

The use of forests to aid in the natural protection of the environment is a common thread across the partner regions.

“Defence strategies for the forest systems, are aimed at protecting these areas against erosion, forest fires, disease and pests”, (Murcia).



5.9 Public consultation and participation (Agenda 21).

Since the United Nation conference in Rio de Janeiro (The Earth Summit) signatory countries made an obligation to co-operate in the fields of the environment and development.

European governments built on this in June 1993 at Helsinki by adopting a set of guiding principles, the Pan European Criteria (PEC), for sustainable management of European forests. This was further enhanced in 1998 where a European conference in Lisbon, expanded the PEC's to include, social, public participation and consultation issues.

5.10 Integration with other land management & ecological networks.

5.11 Forestry within Integrated Rural Development

Throughout the partner regions there is little integration between forestry and other land uses such as agriculture. This is seen as a weakness and steps are beginning to be taken to rectify this situation, initially at a regional level.

Forestry is seen as not only aiding rural development, but as an important part of the ongoing development of rural areas. Steps are being taken to integrate rural development and forest policy.

5.12 Integration of small private woodland owners (formal vs. informal co-operatives).

5.13 State provision of management systems for the private sector.

5.14 Small private owners.

“The issue of the ownership of forest land represents a serious problem for the forestry sector, as forest land is normally divided up among several different small owners. This situation makes it difficult, if not impossible to have integrated management of the land”, (Murcia). Whilst none of the partner regions wish to change the broad forest ownership, all realise that this broad ownership causes problems with integration and the adoption of management and certification systems.

Table 5.1 Forestry Planning and Management

Strengths	Weakness
Regional development programs	Forest ownership structure
High degree of support at regional level	Lack of resources staff and money to complete development programs
High degree of expertise in the area	
Opportunities	Threats
Opportunities to learn from our partners	Insecure funding
Increase in public awareness concerning green issues	Increase in number of inactive woodland owners
Forest resource under utilised	